



Sexual Assault Legislation

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Position Statement:

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council supports legislation pertaining to mandating sexual violence education in high school.

Position

It is the Position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, in support of mandating the implementation of sexual violence prevention curriculum in Iowa's high schools ought to be enacted.

Rationale

Students face the threat of sexual abuse every day, beginning from a young age and continuing into adulthood. However, within public schools, the topic is considered taboo and therefore not discussed in an educational setting. [1] Today, 1 in 71 men and 1 in 5 women have reported experiencing rape at some point in their lives, and 79% of sexual assaults will take place before age 25. [2] Additionally, 20% of adult females and 5-10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident.

We have an epidemic in our country and state concerning sexual violence and unhealthy relationships. This problem begins with the lack of education students receive concerning these topics. With many schools in Iowa requiring little to no education on this topic, we are observing that our students are not only being abused while they are still in school, but they are also leaving high school and going into college with minimal knowledge on important topics such as consent and healthy relationships.

[3] As of March 1st, 2016, 24 states, including surrounding states Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, have enacted legislation requiring sexual education concerning topics such as healthy relationships, child sexual assault, and some have enacted education concerning consent.

Recommended Action

To combat sexual assault in high schools and prevent sexual assault in colleges, we recommend that human growth and development instruction and material in schools include age-appropriate information regarding sexual assault prevention become mandatory programs in Iowa high schools through the passage of HF161. We also recommend that teachers and other relevant school officials be given instruction on how to prevent, recognize, and report child sexual assault. With these two actions being taken, we can ensure that our children will be given protection and prevention-based education at their schools.

Due to the strong connection between sexual assault and certain forms of human trafficking, we must also incorporate human trafficking education into the sexual assault curriculum. This would include a large focus on the meaning of human trafficking and the warning signs every individual should know. Human trafficking education would be included as a subsection to this sexual assault curriculum.

Because of the national epidemic of sexual assault, Iowa is in a position to educate and prevent these events from happening. We must start by implementing education and curriculum dealing with consent and healthy relationships. If we implement this provision, we will see a decrease in sexual and child violence in Iowa, as has occurred in similar cases nationwide including New York City and Washington D.C., and an increase in awareness in high school students concerning consensual sex and healthy relationships.

We hope you will consider these positions and pass this piece of legislation in order to protect and educate the youth of Iowa.

Sources

- 1- "Sexual Violence Facts at a Glance." (n.d.): n. pag. Center for Disease Control Violence Prevention. Center for Disease Control, 2012. Web. 3 Jan. 2016.
- 2- Finkelhor, David. ".Developmental Victimization: The Comprehensive Study of Childhood Victimization." Crimes Against Children Research Center. Sage Publications, 14 June 2007. Web. 03 Jan. 2016.
- 3- "State Policies on Sex Education in Schools." State Policies on Sex Education in Schools. National Conference on State Legislatures, 21 Dec. 2016. Web. 03 Dec. 2017.